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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

CD NO.

DATE OF 1 - 15 Feb. 1953
INFORMATION

DATE DIST. 1 APR 1953

NO. OF PAGES 8

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT INDICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES

HOW PUBLISHED

**WHERE
PUBLISHED**

DATE
PUBLISHED

LANGUAGE

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CPW Report No. 72 -- USSR

(1 - 15 February 1953)

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CORRUPTION IN ECONOMY

During the period under review there are several radio and press attacks against corruption in industry and agriculture. Although theft of public property is frequently discussed in the context of counter-revolutionary activities and linked with political vigilance, it appears that the majority of the crimes are not of a political nature. Oblique references to the malefactors appearing in feuilletons and other press items (not broadcast) mention that the motivation is to amass private fortunes and live better. All official strictures against the illegal acquisition of socialist property are directed not so much against perpetration or perpetrators of the crime as against the appropriate Party and Soviet officials for their failure to forestall such criminal activities.

A broadcast from Proskurov (3 February) quotes a RADIANSKE PODYLIA article by the oblast chief of the Justice Administration which appeals to the courts and prosecution organs to intensify their activities against squanderers of socialist property. The average citizen, it is claimed, still fails to realize that socialist property is "sacred and inviolable" and must therefore be safeguarded "like the pupil of one's eye" (yak zinytsya oka), but local officials have not done much to make such a realization possible. There is too much "carelessness, lightheadedness, dawdling, nepotism and suppression of criticism" among those who should be fighting against such manifestations. The courts are therefore urged to mete out "severest punishment" for the slightest infringement of the rules for safeguarding socialist property. Another suggested method of dealing with the theft of public property is "to create impossible conditions" for such criminal activities, but that point is not elaborated. LITERARY GAZETTE (7 February) reveals that a complaint made by one of its readers in Ashkhabad about wholesale squandering at the Republican Administration of Auxiliary Raw Materials (Giyavtorsyrya) has stirred the Turkmenian Council of Ministers into action. An investigation established that raw materials and State funds had been disappearing as fast as they could be obtained. Some of the Administration's high officials have already been removed from their posts and others are still under investigation.

Corruption in Turkmenistan on a larger scale is discussed in PRAVDA (13 February) by Central Committee Secretary Babayev. Thievery and all sorts of abuses, he says, will continue as long as "unchecked" (neproverennye) people are admitted to the ranks of the Communist Party. People of dubious political and executive qualifications, he intimates, cannot be expected to "select honest and trusted people" for important jobs. The Ashkhabad agricultural rayon is a case in point, but not an "isolated" case:

With the knowledge and sometimes on the direct recommendation of the rayon Party Committee, dishonest people and squanderers of public property are frequently appointed chairmen of collective farms.

Russian text:

С ведома, а иногда по прямой рекомендацией райкома, председателями колхозов в ряде случаев выдвигаются недобросовестные люди, расхитители общественного имущества.

The management of the Karabogazsulfat (gas and sulphate combine) had been covering the huge losses it sustained with funds belonging to the State, and to cover that illegal practice it resorted to the inclusion of "non-existent production" (nesushchestvuyushchuyu produktsiyu) in its reports. "A sort of mutual amnesty" (svoego roda vzaimnaya amnistia) is said to exist among the officials of the Ashkhabad railroad: they tend to overlook each other's mistakes and criticism is practically unknown among them.

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Thus it was known that the former chief of the freight service, Urkhanyan, had been engaging in illegal activities and tampering with State funds, but far from calling him to account, his colleagues "encouraged his anti-State activities" (pooshchryali ego antigosudarstvennie deistvia).

Political nearsightedness (politicheskaya blizorukost) is, according to IZVESTIA (11 February), a godsend to all parasites and thieves who would despoil the State at the first opportunity. Just what such "criminal negligence" in the employment of executives may lead to is cited in the case of the Central Machine-Building Administration of the USSR Railroad Ministry. A certain comrade Rosen, a man without definite qualifications and a "former wrecker" (byvshiy vreditel), had no difficulty in obtaining an executive post in the mentioned organization as an "experimenting engineer-mechanic." His experiments, however, turned out to be of a different kind: he organized a "gang of criminals" (shaika prestupnikov) and with their complicity managed to rob the Administration of over a million rubles. Another phony engineer and "former criminal" who wormed his way into the Turkmenian Food Ministry made off with 243,000 rubles' worth of products after a short term of "service."

STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (11 February) regretfully admits that "there are still people in our society ... whose attitude does not reflect a concern for safeguarding public property." The paper goes on to say that instances of theft have been disclosed in industrial enterprises, collective farms and particularly in the oblast's retail trade network where "turn-over plans are tampered with and law-breakers are shielded." An unspecified amount of communal property is reported to have been misappropriated at the Stalingrad city retail stores, and cattle losses, presumably through squandering, have been sustained by a number of surrounding collective farms. The "Krasny Oktyabr" plant alone is said to have lost "millions of rubles" in one year as a result of waste and "mismanagement."

The exposure of a gang of swindlers and embezzlers does not mean the end of corruption, says RADYANSKA UKRAINA editorially on 13 February: we must fight against the indolence (rotoziystvo) of our officials which is primarily responsible for facilitating their criminal activities. The paper reminds its readers of the warning published in its 6 February issue against the criminals who "built their nests" at the Kirovograd and Zaporozhye oblast grain-procurement organizations. Many of them are said to have been dismissed and punished but others evidently are still there since socialist property continues to disappear:

Suffice it to say that half of the 12 heads of the Kirovograd Oblast granaries were at one time or other brought to criminal responsibility for crimes against the State.

Ukrainian version:

Dosyt skazaty, shcho tut sered 12 zaviduyushchikh komorami holovyna v rizniy chas prytyagalasya do kryminalnoy vidpovidalnosti za zlochyny pered derzhavoy.

A transmission from Chkalov (13 February) quotes CHKALOVSKAYA PRAVDA as saying that "the spirit of indolence and wool gathering" has not been banished from many of the oblast organizations. Asserting that intensified political vigilance is an indispensable method of coping with the incidence of embezzlement and plundering of public property, the paper implicitly admits that a large number of the crimes are perpetrated by people who have not been freed from "private property tendencies" (chastno-sobstvennicheskije tendentsii). A recent decree issued by the Belorussian Finance Ministry requiring all enterprises and organizations to submit to local finance organs within a specified time, the necessary information about their personnel, production norms, wages and administrative expenses.

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The object of this detailed registration is not stated but its importance is emphasized in the announcement that "administrative proceeding" (administrativniye mery) will be started against any organization which fails to comply with the mentioned order.

A ZVYAZDA editorial broadcast from Minsk on 14 February says that some Party organizations--Molodechno Oblast, for example--"could not care less" about the implementation of directives from above or, for that matter, about the implementation of their own decisions. Indeed some rayon committees are known to have adopted certain well-meaning decisions at special meetings, but "failed to inform" the rank-and-file members about them. The paper refers to these incidents to support the contention that many Party officials, admittedly incompetent in intra-Party affairs, cannot be entrusted with the supervision of economic activities.

We still have numerous business executives who think that the enterprises in their care do not belong to the State but are their private property ... Such cases occurred in several localities of Vitebsk Oblast.

A report from Kiev (15 February) tells of a recent plenary session held by the oblast Party Committee to look into the matter of "safeguarding Socialist property" but does not offer any further details. It is merely pointed out that the head of the Oblast Industrial Board (Ob-prom-rada) insisted on the intensification of "social control" over the work of trade and communal feeding organizations and on "the struggle against spoilage and embezzlement."

AGRICULTURE

Proper care of livestock and mechanization are the two major topics and, implicitly, the main chronic illnesses of agriculture. The two reasons usually cited for the almost uniform slow progress of the stock-breeding industry are inadequate and insufficient winter quarters and lack of fodder. The latter shortage, incidentally, is attributed largely to faulty distribution rather than to inadequate supplies. Reviewing the livestock situation in the country as a whole, PRAVDA (3 February) does not see any cause for optimism, particularly at this time of the year:

Little fodder is being prepared; cattle sheds have not been repaired; the tending and feeding of cattle have been functioning badly. Such a situation has arisen in several oblasts of Kazakh SSR, in a number of rayons of Siberia, Smolensk, Vladimir, Tambov oblasts and in Buryat-Mongolian ASSR.

Russian text:

Malo zagotovleno kormov, ne otremonirovany zhivotno-vodcheskie pomeshcheniya, plokhoe nalazheniye ukhod za skotom i ego kormleniye. Podobnoye polozheniye sozdalos v nekotorykh oblastyakh Kazakhskoy SSR, v ryade rayonov Sibiri, Smolenskoy, Vladimirskoy, Tambovskoy oblastey, Buryat-Mongolskoy ASSR.

Hinting that reasons other than incompetence may account for the sorry state of affairs in the cattle industry, the paper stresses the necessity of assigning "honest" farmers to work on the stock farms. Another helpful suggestion offered is to make greater use of agricultural specialists and veterinarians by placing them in charge of stockfarms and heeding their advice.

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KRASNY KURGAN speaks editorially on 3 February of the "alarming situation" (trevozhnoye sostoyaniye) revealed in the oblast cattle industry, particularly in Mishkinsky Rayon where the "elementary rules for the care of livestock are being ignored." It would not be too much to say, the paper adds, that a large number of other rayons are not much more advanced than the above-named one. Wintering conditions are said to be especially bad in Katayevskiy, Dalmatovskiy, Schuschunskiy, Kurgamyshskiy, Sverinogolovskiy and several other unnamed rayons:

Fodder is being issued only twice without being steamed. Premises for livestock are inadequate. A considerable number of cattle is left in the open too long. All these facts lead to losses and a decreasing productivity of cattle.

Yurievskiy and Iomakovskiy rayons are the worst in Dnepropetrovsk Oblast as far as the care of cattle is concerned, according to a ZARIYA editorial broadcast on 6 February. But that does not mean that the situation in the other rayons is much better. Winter quarters for the livestock are said to be both inadequate and inferior, particularly in the backward kolkhozes "of which there are many," and cattle productivity has been the lowest in years. The annual milk yield per cow, for example, has dropped to 1,000 liters as compared to the expected high yield of three to four thousand. Low livestock productivity has also been the object of a recent discussion by the Tadjik Central Party Committee at its recent session, according to a home service report from Moscow on 7 February. The Republic's Academy of Sciences and Agricultural Institute were sharply criticized for their failure to eliminate the shortcomings in the livestock-breeding industry and to create an adequate fodder base in the Republic as a whole. No further details are offered, however.

Discussing the grave shortcomings in the livestock-wintering campaign, CHKALOVSKAYA KOMUNA (8 February) suggests that the human element may have something to do with them. There has been a great deal of just criticism of the "squandering and pilfering of fodder" (razhazariivanie i raskhischenie kormov) and the "anti-mechanization mood" (antimekhanizatorskie nastroyeniya) of the stock farmers, the paper points out, but very little attention has been paid to the welfare of the people who, in the final analysis, determine the success or failure of stockbreeding.

Unfortunately, there are many cases of underestimation and sometimes even neglectful attitude toward livestock-breeding cadres. At some agricultural artels the necessary cultural and living conditions have not been created for kolkhozniks working at remote farms.

In many rayons of Kaluga Oblast the wintering of cattle "has not been organized at all," according to ZNAMYA (10 February). Nor is the fodder preparation such as to inspire optimism since little has been done to mechanize the work. The paper names three rayons--Rokotinskiy, Dobryninskiy and Kuybyshev--where "immediate Party attention" is required to straighten matters out, but admits that there are "many others" which are also lagging behind. Average oblast figures "cannot satisfy anyone" (nikogo ne mogut udovletvorit), and that is precisely the case with the Stalino Oblast livestock industry, says SOTSIALISTICHESKIY KURAS on 11 February. The oblast as a whole may have fulfilled its stock-breeding plans but "the undeniable successes should not blind us to the serious shortcomings" still noted in a number of rayons. Thus in Alexandrovskiy, Primorskiy, Krasnolimansky and Volodarskiy rayons the plan was fulfilled for every type of animal except cows, while in Andreyevskiy, Slavyansk and Krasnoarmeiskiy rayons the sheep-breeding part of the plans remains unfulfilled.

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As for the milk yield, the failure is still more pronounced: the output in 1952 was lower than in 1951, and there is no visible improvement this year.

Not More But Better Tractors Needed: Extremely unsatisfactory is STALINSKY PUT's editorial version (3 February) of the tractor-repair situation in Kustanai Oblast. Most of the oblast machine-tractor stations are said to be unable to cope with their plans, and at least eight of them are so slow that they are actually "disrupting the plans." All four machine livestock-breeding stations "are lagging behind inadmissibly." There is no shortage of tractors or any other equipment, the paper says, but since a large part of the machinery is always under repair there is a shortage of serviceable tractors, combines and other machines. STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA (4 February) speaks of numerous MTS which "unduly delay" the signing of contracts with kolkhozes, signing them "in an off-hand manner" and leave out certain stipulations that should be included. A similar complaint is voiced by KOMMUNA (3 February) which says that many MTS officials still do not realize that "contracts between machine-tractor stations and collective farms are inviolable law." In at least four rayons such contracts were concluded "only after great delay," and after they were concluded "a formal attitude was taken toward their fulfillment."

RADYANSKA UKRAINIA (5 February) is critical of the technical aspect of agriculture by declaring that "in the Republic as a whole the repair of tractors and trailing equipment is lagging behind" (v tsilomu po respublitsi remont traktoriv i prirjadnogo remanentu vidstaye). One third of the Republic's tractors, mostly of the Diesel type, have not been made ready for field work, and the same applies to the other "inventory" (remanent) and transportation facilities. Eighteen MTS are far behind the repair plans in Izmail Oblast alone. The shortage of serviceable tractors is responsible also for the failure of the autumn plowing plan in Odessa, Poltava, Nikolayev, Sumy and Lvov oblasts. And this whole business is further aggravated by the fact that even the overhauled machines do not come up to expectations: "The quality of the repair work is low; certain machines have to be overhauled again" (Yakist remontu traktoriv nyzka; deyaki mashyny treba stavty na povtoruiy remont). What RADYANSKA UKRAINIA had to say about the state of agricultural equipment in the Ukraine is repeated almost verbatim a week later (13 February) by ZVIAZDA in a review of Belorussian agriculture:

The MTS of the Republic as a whole did not cope with the tasks assigned them. The productivity of available tractors is as a rule low. Numerous MTS did not fulfill their contracts with collective farms ... The standard of machine repairs in many stations is low, which leads in turn to numerous breakdowns.

Agricultural Quarter Violations, such as illegal acquisition of land and other farm property, tampering with the indivisible funds, payroll abuses etc., are still frequently referred to in the press but only two sources discuss them on the radio. A broadcast from Kishinev (5 February) quotes from a speech of Chairman of Moldavia's Council of Ministers Rud in which he stated that the main reason behind the poor performance of the Republic's machine-tractor stations is the "violation of the collective farm statute" (narushenie selkhozustava). He did not elaborate on the point. A MOLOT editorial broadcast from Rostov on 15 February says that the enemies of the collective farm system, the usual reference to statute violators, are still active in the oblast. In several unnamed rayons "fortunes" (bogatstvo) are still being made from communal funds, mismanagement of labor day payments and other violations of the agricultural code. It is revealed that a number of officials have already been apprehended and "severely punished" (strogo nakazany) but the crime has not yet been eliminated:

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Severe violations of the code have recently been discovered in Alexandrovskiy Rayon ... Code violations are occurring also in a number of other rayons.

The following extracts from broadcasts are typical of all the regional complaints about the technical progress of agriculture during the period under review.

7 February--A large number of machine-tractor stations ... have not yet repaired even one half of their machines ... It is necessary to train 750 tractor drivers; however, only 319 are preparing for this work (KALININGRADSKAYA PRAVDA);

5 February--In many machine-tractor stations tractor-repair work and repair of other machinery and equipment is extremely unsatisfactory ... out of 60 people who should have been detailed for technical studies by kolkhoz leaders, only 6 took the course (MCLOT editorial);

February--It is important to make sure now that tractors are not allowed to break down during field work because of poor repairs ... as they were in former years (PRAVDA MOSKVA editorial);

February--There are many MTS in the oblast, however, which use tractors, combines and other agricultural machinery unsatisfactorily, allowing delays and a low level of work. This has led to a lag at a number of kolkhozes (Report from Sumy);

February--Ten machine-tractor stations have so far repaired not more than one-half of their tractors ... the training of tractor-drivers has not yet begun (broadcast from Sumy);

"Progressive System" of Income Distribution among collective farmers is discussed in a PRAVDA article by V. Chuvikov on 10 February (not broadcast). For the benefit of those who might have misunderstood the part of Malenkov's Congress speech dealing with agricultural production, the author reiterates that the distribution of income in kind among individual collective farmers, while an important matter, in itself is not to be rated on a par with the farmers' obligations to the State. In other words, the debts to the State must be paid and various "communal funds" must be created before any of the produce is distributed among the farmers. At the end of 1952, it is recalled, many collective farms were found to have insufficient funds--indivisible seed and fodder funds etc.--and remained indebted to the State in respect to deliveries in kind because of the incorrect practice (nepravilnaya politika) of distributing the surplus products among their members too soon. This sort of thing is not to be repeated in 1953 since under the "progressive system of income distribution" (progressivnaya sistema raspredelenia dokhodov) priority is given to the requirements of the State and the community (that is, the collective farm) which are to be taken care of before the remuneration of individual farm workers can be considered. Thus the first on the priority list are the prescribed deliveries to the State; this is followed by the specified deductions for the indivisible and other communal funds (osobchestvennye fondy) and payments on loans acquired from the State. The remaining financial and material funds are then distributed among the farmers "strictly according to" (v strogom sootvetstvi) the number of work days put in by each individual and the proportionate yields in terms of farm and animal products that his work has produced.

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This "progressive" method of distribution apparently is designed to make the welfare of the farmer entirely dependent on the progress of the collective farm system and the State as a whole. That much may be inferred from Mikoyan's criticism of the previous practice of distributing farm surpluses immediately after the payment of State debts on the basis of the number of days worked by each farmer:

This incorrect practice of distributing almost all material and financial income, according to work days, after the obligations to the State have been met is a hindrance to the development of public economy ...

Russian text:

Takaya nepravilnaya praktika, kogda posle vypolnenia gosudarstvennykh obyazatelstv pochni vse naturalnie i deneshnie dokhody raspredelyetsya na trudodni, tormozit razvitie obshchestvennogo khozaistva ...

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